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ABSTRACT

This annual publication of the Young Adult Learning Academy (YALA) presents the art and writing of students in YALA. (YALA provides educational services to young people who have dropped out of school, are between 16 and 24 years of age, and read below the eighth-grade level.) Editors of the journal are also students. Poems, letters, essays, and stories are divided into these thematic sections: "Growing Up"; "Profiles"; "Loving"; "Relationships"; "This Ol' World"; and "The Struggle to Survive." (YLB)

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1991 Yale Journal

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YALA JOURNAL 1991

Young Adult Learning Academy
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May 1991

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Acknowledgements

The YALA Journal is an annual publication by the Young Adult Learning Academy (YALA). The Journal is produced by a class of students who volunteer to serve as writers, editors, production assistants and artists.

This year the magazine staff participated in an Arts in Education Pilot Program along with another group who specialized in Performing Arts. Michael Filippi was in charge of the production of the magazine, and Sallyann Keith supervised the small reading group who evaluated over 150 student contributions. Michael taught the students desktop publishing using Page-Maker and the Macintosh. William Jung worked with other students individually to produce and develop original photographs.

The journal is one of several YALA productions and projects designed to encourage students to assume active roles in their education and to present their ideas, feelings, and craft to others. The results of their efforts make us all proud. I want to thank everyone involved in the creation of YALA Journal VII.

The Young Adult Learning Academy was established in 1984 to provide educational services for young people who have dropped out of high school. In order to enter YALA, students must be between the ages of 16 and 24 and must read below the eighth grade level. More than 1,000 people participate in our program each year.

YALA was developed by the Mayor's Office of Education Services (formerly Youth Services), the New York City Department of Employment and the New York City Board of Education. In 1988, YALA became a program of the City University of New York.

I wish to express thanks to the agencies and foundations that provide financial support to YALA:

New York City's Mayor's Office of Education Services
New York City Department of Employment
New York City Board of Education
New York State Legislature through CUNY
The Aaron Dramond Foundation
The Robin Hood Foundation
The Cummings Memorial Foundation

Peter Kleinbard
Director, YALA
May 1991

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Introduction

Dear Yala Community,

The *Yala Journal* presents a world in translation. The emotions, advice, and ponderings of New York City's young adults can be found in these pages translated into their poems, letters, essays, and stories. In keeping with tradition, the *Yala Journal 7* has developed into a valuable resource. Students and teachers alike, sensitive and curious, will benefit from the joys and pains contained within.

More than just a keepsake for YALA graduates to remember a turning point in their lives, the *Yala Journal* represents a great achievement for literacy. The works collected here were selected by the *Yala Journal* class' student-editors from a school-wide pool of contributions submitted from over a total of twenty reading, writing, social studies, and child care classes.

The student-editors managed the production schedule of this volume from initial word processing to final layout. On Macintosh computers, using Microsoft Word, the student-editors typed in all contributions (about 170). They read the contributions and judged them on the basis of their literary merit -- returning some contributions to their authors for clarification when necessary. With some improvising, the student-editors divided up the selected works into thematic sections. The student-editors chose a section to manage or co-manage, giving it a name, ordering the works within it, and choosing appropriate photographs. Then after mastering the basics of PageMaker 4.0, they formatted the texts, ordered the sections, and designed the final layout and cover. The Editorial Board's persistence, patience, and effort resulted in an authentic product that we will always be proud of!

Be the Best You Can Be -- Be Proud!!
Love,

Michael Filippi

YALA JOURNAL 1991 EDITORIAL BOARD

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GROWING UP

Myself as a Child

I can't remember myself as a child, so I'm going to write about what my mother told me as I got older. It was that I was very pretty, was a trouble maker because I used to start trouble with my sisters and brothers, and told my mother every little thing they had done. When they hit me, I would go running to my mother, so they could get punished.

I was also told that I had this favorite shirt with different color strips on it that I never wanted to take off. I wore this shirt almost everyday. When I took the shirt off to take a bath or to wash it, my mother would try to hide it from me, so that I wouldn't wear it. I would find it and put it on the very next day, and my mother would just laugh.

Now that I've gotten older I still see myself as a trouble maker and strive to hold on to something that I really care about and want in life.

Wanda Ricks

I Remember

I remember learning to skate.
I remember seeing my grandmother's
house when I was eleven.
I remember learning to ride a bike
for the first time.
I remember being two years old
and having a quarter down my throat.
I remember learning how to crochet.
I remember meeting my best friend,
Yolanda.
I remember learning my multiplication
tables.
I remember waking up in the morning.
I remember falling asleep quickly,
but never learning how.

Valerie D. Myers

The Forgotten Child

The homeless child weeps
the tear of shame.
Wondering who's to blame.
Suffering the consequences
of the blind world.

Shoppers rush by
gathering Christmas treasures.
While the homeless child's
only pleasure is
surviving day by day.
Families gather for a
delicious Christmas dinner.
While the homeless gather morsels
discarded in back alleys.

The children of the
world slumber peacefully.
While the forgotten children
make do with cardboard boxes.

The starry sky is a beautiful thing
but to the homeless it
is all life brings.
So next time you
wish upon a star, pray for
THE FORGOTTEN CHILD.

Janice Malave

A Great Fall

I remember this park my sisters wanted to go to. It was in Queens, around where we lived. I was about seven or eight years old. I was swinging in the big swings and my sister said she wanted to race to see who could go the highest, come back down, and get out of the swing. High as I could go, I saw her winning, so I decided to try and jump off the swing, and there was a big fence which surrounded the swings. I don't know how it happened, but I hit the fence with my back first. I lost my breath for a few minutes. I also scraped-up my knees and elbows. My sisters and brothers took me home and about an hour later I was back to normal. Ever since then, I never went up that high in a swing because I was afraid that I would fall out again and hurt myself.

Wanda Ricks

Why?

Why is my life so messed up?
Why is it that everything I set out
to do goes wrong?
Why? It's like I can't help myself
I feel lost and almost helpless
There was a time when I thought
I could do almost anything including
reaching up to touch the skies
Then I came crashing back to reality
It wasn't meant to be
I feel angry with myself for
not having the confidence to do
what I want to do
I almost hate myself and
feel the only thing that could right
the wrong I did was to be DEAD.
Why? Why? Why?
Why do I think the way I do?
Only the LORD knows and can help me
out of this mess.

Roslyn Bobb-Semple

Brooklyn & Staten Island

I remember first growing up in Brooklyn. I enjoyed living there. There was so much to do there. I used to go out and play tops in the streets with other kids my age and older. We used to block off the streets, play music, and had block parties which consisted of playing music, games, and having cook-outs, etc. When it was really hot, instead of going to pools, we used to turn on the 'Johnny pumps' and play (under the hot scorching sun) in the cool water. We even cut the tops and bottoms off of cans so we could aim the gushing water in different directions. What hurt me is that one day I came home from school and my mother told me that we were going to be moving; it hurt so much, I cried.

In another territory, feeling all alone, I had to think of something to do. It wasn't like Brooklyn where they had the game tops; it was Staten Island where I felt all alone. If it weren't for my brothers, I would have really been in a vise, but with the help of them, I managed to do pretty well.

First struggle: school — getting to know everyone; wondering who to be with, and who not to be with.

Second struggle: the neighborhood — I had to adjust to this new surrounding, but it worked out well. I got a family of friends which I thought could never happen. I started getting into things I really enjoyed -- like girls, going out, music, and art. Up to this day, I want to move back to Brooklyn, but leaving Staten Island will be another task.

Wallace Jefferson

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a very bad crime;
Those who commit it don't use their minds.

The ones who practice it are very confused,
Not the ones that don't; those are the ones that are being abused.

Kids are afraid to go and tell,
Fearing they're wrong and are going to hell.

The abuse that we label as emotional,
Is much more than psychological.

Children who act different don't have a defect,
they're the victims of the abuse we call neglect.

Children that prefer to always be next to you,
Are the ones that have been involved in the abuse we call sexual.

Abusers are family, neighbors, and friends,
The ones you won't fear until it's too late and close to the end.

Fawn - Nita Lunn

I Can Control My Body

Why are you doing this? All you want me to do is bad things. Why do you want me to hurt and tell lies to people? I'm older; I've gotten more mature. I know I can stop you from making me a terrible person. I have a lot of heart and soul that will overrule the negative things you try to push me to do. I beg of you to just go away, and if you refuse, I will have to force you out. I know I can do it, I just know I can do it, so just beat it.

Wanda Ricks

Drugs & Crime

What are the effects on children of drugs and crime in the neighborhood?

1. Drugs affect the people: the addiction of drugs causes many problems. It affects a person mentally and emotionally.

2. It destroys homes: the money, furniture, and things of value go to the waste of drugs.

3. It destroys homes and dreams of families. The abuse of drugs makes families separate from each other. Trust and honesty are no longer in the home. The children lose touch with their parents. There is no longer a chance of survival until the addict surrenders to recovery.

4. Crime increases: the more the addict uses drugs, the more money he/she needs to support the habit. There may be many crimes committed. Crime increases heavily because of the need for the drug.

5. Safety and security are needed desperately. We need more help in our community concerning a drug free neighborhood with reduced crime rates.

Latarsha Thomas

He is an empty space

As he searches for his soul, he keeps coming up with an empty space.

As he looks across the room to what's on the other side, he sees an empty space in the corner of the room. He can adjust his vision and focus on the wall. He feels a certain security. He can relate to the other side because he is an empty man inside. By the look on his face, he does not have a trace of his past, he was never much of a man.

His parents passed away when he was just a baby. He grew up in a shelter. He never had anyone to speak to besides the workers in the shelter. He grew up with many strong obstacles in his path; growing up without parents was very hard for this man. He had no soul or awareness of who he really was.

The man with an empty space found it very hard to communicate with others. He was never taught how to listen. He only knew how to stand guard and protect the little he had. As he looks into the mirror, he says to himself, "Why was I never taught to love? Why was I never taught how to cry? Why do I have such a very low self-esteem? Why can't I communicate with others?" Silence filled the room for a second. He thought to himself, "I know why! The most important people in this world are your parents. They are the key to your soul. They are the foundation of your life. With parents, you develop strength, happiness, and most of all your self-esteem."

Esther Figueroa

The Saddest Thing in My Life That I Remember

One day in the springtime twelve years ago, when I was very little, I remember this day so well, I was playing down the block with my friends. A friend of the family came down the block and told me that I had to go home. That my mother wanted me. When I got in the house, my mother told my brothers and sisters and I that my brother William didn't return from school.

One hour later a friend came to the house. It was my brother's friend from school. He said that my brother had gotten hit by two police cars, that a police car ran the red light. My brother was hit 50 feet into the sky.

My brother was twelve years old. That day was going very slowly. For some reason I knew something was wrong, but I was strong for my brother and my family.

The police didn't contact my parents until two hours after the accident. When my parents got to Kings Country Hospital my brother was listed, as a John Doe patient. When my father walked into the emergency room, he came out screaming, "Help him God!" Three to five minutes later, he told my mother that he didn't think my brother William was going to make it. After they told my parents that my brother will be all right for the night, my Aunt Joanna went to pick them up from the hospital. My parents and Aunt Joanna arrived at the house after 11:00 p.m. All my brothers and sisters were sitting in the dining room. My parents came into the dining room and told all of us that William would be all right. Fifteen minutes after they explained my brother's condition to us, the phone rang. It was the hospital; they said my brother went into a coma. My brother had gotten worse and my parents again went to the hospital. Later that night my aunt, uncles and friends came over to support the family.

My parents came home at 3:00 a.m. from the hospital. We all were still in the dining room. All of a sudden my father screamed. He looked around at my brothers and sisters, knowing that someone was missing from the family. It was my lovable brother William. During the next couple of days it seemed like everything would be all right. We all sat down in the dining room talking about what had happened to our brother. My father said my brother was still in a coma, but that he would be okay. That he was strong. My sisters and brothers held hands together with my parents and prayed for my lovable brother. Sunday, March 5, 1979, at 5:00 a.m., my brother died. My mother told us when we came down for breakfast that morning. My brother was dead. I said, "then how is he going to brush his teeth?" My mother was crying, my father was in shock. My sisters and brothers didn't believe it and cried and hugged each other. But for some reason I knew he was there. My lovable brother William. He still lives to this day in my heart.

Elanda Jones

A Story of Two Souls

I was only 15 years old when I had a child. All my freedom was taken away from me. All I ever did was take care of my child. I felt cheated, like my life was taken away from me because of this child. I had to find a way to get rid of her. I tried giving her away, but it did not work because I missed her too much, and I felt it was unfair that someone else should pay for my mistake, so I got her back.

I was so unhappy that for every little thing I beat the child or I blamed her for my life being messed up and her father leaving me.

I sat down and thought about how I could kill my own child. God, forgive me, please! and I did it. I took the pillow and put it over her mouth so she would stop breathing, but then, at that moment, I woke up and saw what I had done. I cried and tried to bring my baby back to life, but it was too late. So I just went and buried her.

Every time I went to sleep or closed my eyes, I heard, "No, Mommy, no, don't do that. Please, I beg you; It's not *my* fault." But yes it *was* her fault; she took my life away from me. So this went on for months, but it got too much because it was so real and I couldn't deal with it. So I lay down to go to sleep and I waited for her to come, but she never did until I fell into a deep sleep and then she came and said, "Now, mother, this is pay back time. Now let's see how you feel about getting your life taken away from you and better yet, I did not ask to be born. It was not *my* fault."

So my child did as I did to her. She took the pillow and put it over my mouth and stopped me from breathing, but with my last breath I said, "I love you, my child, but it was too much for me to handle at 16 years old. Please forgive me." And the last thing I heard was my child saying, "Please, wake up, mother. I forgive you and I shall leave you to lead your life the best way. You know you would pay in time. Please, wake up. Please, wake up now. I am begging you, please!"

"I guess you're going to pay me back like I did to you and not get up. I am so sorry mother. I love you as well, mother, and please find it in your heart to forgive me. Now I am the one begging you."

And both souls left hand in hand
together, never to be parted again.

MaryAnn Kessler

First Love

I can't remember not knowing Reggie Johnson because he was an importatnt part of my life. Reggie and I met when I was 14 years old. Childhood sweethearts -- that's what you may call it. He was so cute, tall, and very aggressive. He lived with his father and older brother. To my knowledge, love at that time was butterflies in your stomach and little hearts written on paper. We used to take walks in the park on nice sunny days. I would watch him play basketball with his friends while sitting on the park bench waiting for him. When mornings came, he used to knock on the door to take me to school. With a big smile on my face I was grateful. We spoke on the phone for hours on the days we didn't see each other.

When I was 15 years of age Reg had asked me a question that I was confused about. Would I have sex with him? My heart felt like it had left and would never return. The answer I had given him was that I am not prepared for him yet and I want to get married first. Well, you know a lot of females run that line, so that's what I told him, that I wasn't ready yet.

When my 16th birthday came, I had a party and he was my escort. I was drinking with everyone else and the party didn't end 'till 2:00 a.m. that morning. I went with him over to his house after the party. I was acting so silly, but I had my head on my shoulders. He asked me again the same question he had asked when I was 15. I told him yes, not because I was drunk, but because I thought I loved him and wanted to keep him forever.

Did I regret having sex with him? No! because we stayed together for another two more years enjoying each other's companionship. That's what I thought love was: Reggie.

Roshonda Murray

My Dream

When I was younger, I wanted to be other than myself. That's because to me I didn't feel too important.

I wanted to be white! To me white people had it all: big houses, fancy cars, good looking clothes, and lots of money. It seemed like they didn't have a care in the world, like they were in control.

Christmas was always fun. At least that's the way it seemed on T.V. -- always sitting around the piano singing Christmas carols, relatives coming to visit with their children, finding lots of presents under the tree, then enjoying the big dinner at the table. My Christmas was fun, but never like that. I remember a time when we didn't even have a tree. Why couldn't my Christmas be like this one?

As I got older I started to realize that I am somebody and my own personality made me special. I didn't need all this to show love and receive love.

I became very proud of who I am and of my skin color because I learned more about my African background. They showed me that black people went through more than enough to get where we are today. We continue going through changes, just to be treated and spoken to like we are somebody!

Tijuana Jackson

When I was Four

Four — that's a year I could clearly remember. The reason for this is because a lot of things happened to me when I was four.

I have lots of pictures of when I was that age. I had curly, orange hair, green eyes, and I was as white as a bar of Ivory soap. That's where I got the nickname Ivory. I don't care for it, though.

I was a very bright but disobedient child. I always wanted to do things on my own. When someone told me not to do something because I could get hurt, I always had to prove to them I could do it without getting hurt. Boy, was I wrong!

One night, my aunt came over to visit us. She watched me while my mother fed my brother (who was only one at the time) in the other room. Anyway, my aunt and I were in the livingroom watching television and I got bored. So I got up and started running around the coffee table. My aunt kept telling me to cut it out because I was going to get dizzy and fall. But, as I wrote earlier, I was very disobedient, so I ignored her. She got up and started chasing me around the table. I started running faster and faster until, boom! I fell and busted my left eyebrow wide open. I didn't feel any pain at first, but from the shock, I started crying. Luckily, my aunt worked in a hospital, so she knew exactly what to do. She picked me up and carried me to the bathroom. She put my whole head under the freezing cold water. I kicked, screamed, and tried to fight her. I didn't want to be under that cold water. Then here comes my mother, panicking and everything. She kept crying and saying, "Oh my God! My baby! Look at her eye!"

She was driving my aunt and me crazy. My aunt finally told her to be calm because she was frightening me. My mother finally shut up. Then here comes my father and his friend. When my father saw my eye, he grabbed me and drove me straight to the hospital.

At the hospital, the nurse gave my father a bag of ice to hold over my cut. We waited around 15 minutes for the doctor. By the time he came I had calmed down. My father's friend had me cracking up with his dry jokes. I didn't feel any more pain, only numbness. My eye felt as hard as a rock. Finally, the doctor came and got down to work. He gave me four butterfly stitches. I felt no pain at all.

When I got home, I was put to bed. I could hear everybody inside arguing and pointing fingers at whose fault it was. My mother blamed my aunt for not watching me. My aunt blamed my mother for not teaching me to behave. My father just blamed them for being women, and my father's friend kept cracking stupid jokes. They argued so much, they woke my brother up.

Well, anyway, the table in the livingroom was removed, I was scolded, but then pampered.

Being four, I learned a lot. I think that's a very impressionable age. I loved to explore and find out a lot of things for myself. I'm sure many four-year-olds do the same.

Dee Varona

Life

Life is a bitch, but you have to
live with it.
Life is something that you
always remember.
Life is something people go through.
Life starts off as a baby.
Life goes on as a young
person.
Life ends when you die
Life is your own, you could
do anything with it.
Life — there is more about it,
but that's for you to find out.

Elizabeth Aponte

Inside Looking In

As I go along day by day in life, there are often times I ask myself, "Do I know who I am? What purpose do I have on earth? Where is my destination and when will I reach it, if ever?"

Take a good look at yourself. I hear a faint voice inside me say, search deep inside your mind and your heart and you will find the answer to all that life holds for you.

I know I belong somewhere, but where? Here I am, a young Afro-American women with dreams and goals, a beautiful family and loving friends, but still, still I feel empty inside. As if my being has no significance, yet at the same time my existence is enriching the lives of others.

Today I'm starting a new day, a new beginning; I'm taking time to really look at myself through another light, trying to find what I've lost as time goes on.

Today, I'm opening my mind, no longer being oblivious to what my true purpose in life is. I'm inside looking in. For today is tomorrow, as yesterday was once today. My eyes are open.

Keshin Dawkins

PROFILES

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Mrs. Mitchell

Mrs. Mitchell works at YALA school.
The math she teaches is very cool.
She takes her time with everyone.
And makes sure the work is done.
She's very polite and doesn't fight.
She knows her math and she's outa sight.

Dionne Small

A Woman's Education

Janee Collier is a young woman who dropped out of high school, but later obtained her High School Equivalency Diploma in California, at the age of 17. She went on to attend College of Notre Dame in Maryland. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in Math there. Janee also attended the University of Massachusetts, and there she got a Master's in Math Education.

Janee is presently attending Teacher's College at Columbia University, where she is studying to get her Ph.D. in Math Education. Janee is also a Math teacher at the Young Adult Learning Academy (YALA). She teaches Math to young adults.

I asked Janee, how did she enroll in college? She responded by saying, "You fill out an application and pay a fee. You also need GRE test scores." She also told me that some colleges ask you for letters of recommendation. You also need a transcript from your high school and any colleges you had attended.

I asked her how she paid her way through college? She told me that every year she applies for different scholarships in order to finish school. Financial aid only pays no more than half. Janee says, "It's difficult attending college and having a full time job. She says that she doesn't have very much time for herself. She doesn't watch T.V. as often as she would like to. She rarely goes out on dates because she doesn't have enough time. Since she is a teacher at YALA, she stays up late grading papers and planning lessons for the next day. Janee attends school Monday through Friday in the evening from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I asked Janee how many classes can she take? She responded by saying, "As many as you want." Janee only takes two classes every evening and for a whole semester she gets 12 credits.

As my interview concluded, I asked Janee which degree she thought was better and she said, "A Bachelor's degree is better from my experience."

Olivia Biel

One Individual Black Man

Malcolm believed each man should be independent and Blacks should be independent from Whites. For this reason he is trying to say all men should take care of themselves, learning how to survive in the world of struggle and stop depending upon the white man to give, give, give all the time. Once a white man sees you being weak he takes advantage of your kindness and then takes you for granted. For an example, in the movie of Malcolm X he says to the Blacks they should hire their own kind. Blacks should be able to stand on their own two feet. He wants Blacks to realize that we can make it on our own, if only we stick together as a family.

Malcolm X believed Blacks and Whites should be separated. He believed that Blacks should stand alone. Every time Malcolm X mentioned separation some people would cry and say that Muslims were standing for the same thing that white racists stood for when they tried to stir up people's emotions in order to win them over and gain power. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that, "Segregation is that which is forced upon inferiors by superiors. But *separation* is that which is done voluntarily, by two equals for the good of both."(p. 246)

The way I feel about separation and segregation is that Blacks should stand alone in life and try to succeed as a family. Nevertheless, we should try to communicate with others and stop the racial violence. Right now in our society, Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics should try to live in peace and prosperity. I want to stand on top of the mountain and shout out "WE ARE FREE." I would advise people to read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* because he teaches the truth of what happened in Harlem many years ago, as well as today, and what happened in his life. We can all learn from the example of his life.

Rashonda Murray

The Confessions of Nat Turner

On August 21, 1831, a slave preacher known as Nat Turner staged the first recorded rebellion by black slaves in the United States. Mr. Turner, a very persuasive preacher, believed he had divine inspiration. In spite of the failure of the revolt, Mr. Styron believed the event deserved an important place in the history of Black America.

In the year 1831, Southampton County, Virginia was a place of oppression for any Black person — slave or free. Nat Turner, trained as a carpenter and somewhat educated, had it a little easier than most other Blacks. He felt himself to be closer to God than other people and in his spare time he preached. One day he claimed to have been visited by the Lord. From this visit came the idea for a rebellion against slavery. Knowing the penalty for even thinking about insurrection, he took a great deal of time to find soldiers to fight with him. It was essential that his followers be God fearing, loyal, strong, and able to keep secrets. Eventually, Mr. Turner's army grew to seventeen men. This amount would increase as the revolt progressed, or at least that was the plan.

When a revival came to the town of Jerusalem, Virginia, and it was learned that virtually every white man in the area would be there that weekend, Mr. Turner decided that his objective would be the town's armory. They would stop at every town along the way, killing every white they met. None would be spared.

According to the author, William Styron, white people had treated him pretty well on the whole, despite the unpleasant time when he was purchased by poor whites and nearly worked to death. He had been taught to read and write, something virtually unheard of for a slave and then was allowed to preach from the Bible, another unheard of occurrence. Surely Mr. Turner would have some compassion for whites as individuals? Na! All whites were to be killed — no exceptions. This is difficult for Mr. Styron to understand -- such an unknown plan from a man so close to God. As a "free" black man, it is not so difficult for this writer to comprehend the "no exceptions" policy. I believe that Nat perceived to have orders direct from God, which determined his no mercy policy.

The men set out as planned, with a great deal of anger and hatred to spur them on. Complications came when at the very first house they came to, Nat Turner was unable to strike the first blow. He could not (after all his plans) kill. As a result, he lost some control over his men. They went from house to house killing even children and black slaves that fought for their white masters. They drank liquor, raped white women, stole whatever they wanted.

One white girl escaped because Turner was unable to murder her on a second occasion. She was able to warn the town's people and as a result 3,000 whites banded together to put down the insurrection. Turner's army grew to over 25 men who killed over 60 whites before the revolt was ended. By August 25, 1831, all the rebels were killed (along with countless innocent blacks who were in the wrong place at the wrong time).

Nat Turner and his second-in-command, "Hawk," were captured after 6 weeks and given a mock trial. It was during his trial that he wrote a four-page document that was to be known as his confessions. William Styron wrote *The Confessions of Nat Turner* from this document. Hawk had been beaten and tortured so badly his legs were broken, so they chained him to a chair in order to hang him.

Turner was executed last. The trial was merely an effort by the whites to understand what motivated the insurrection. Turner had been treated pretty well for a slave, so how could he act out such a cold-blooded plan? The novel was an effort by William Styron to understand Mr. Turner as well. Perhaps being a black man in America is necessary before one can see how "no-mercy" could be any God-fearing man's policy.

In the words of Frederick Douglas, "Sometimes for a man to understand he must stand under."

Nathaniel Dunton

LOVING

Love

L is for the Loving things he does
O is for the Overtime he shares
with me
V is for the Various things that
make me love him
E is for the way he Eats all
his food that I cook and
the Exciting things we
do together.

Dychan Roberson

Love is...

Love is like a rainy day
over flowing my heart beat.
Knowing this pain I can hardly sleep.
Feeling this pain all I do is weep.

Love is like a person knocking at
the door waiting for someone to open
up and let it in.

Love is strong but sometimes
things go wrong.

Lisa Linen

Feelings

I sit and remember all we've shared
dreaming of all that will be
when you're with me
When you're close to me it feels heavenly
The sound of your voice lights up my day
in each and every way
Your gentleness surrounds me
Your lips entice me
When we're apart emptiness fills my heart
I wonder why it hurts so
but only heaven knows.

Roslyn Bobb-Semple

Happiest Days

The happiest days in my life
are those I shall spend with you.
The dreams I most cherish
You shall help them come true.
The Love that has made our
feelings complete from the start is the very special
Love we share and feel forever sweet-heart.

Kason Manick

If You Were Here

Dear Claude,

The day you left my house, all I could do is think of how I was going to tell you that I still had feelings for you. I kept thinking about how I was wrong for leaving you the way I did. I wanted to tell you exactly how I felt the next day when we were going to go out. I was going to tell you that I still cared and how sorry I was to go and have a baby by someone else.

When I found out that you had died and where it happened, all I did was cry. I would never have expected you to die. You were a very strong man. What happened, what went wrong? I have so many questions like, what were you doing back around my block that night? I wish you were here to answer my questions and even more, so I could tell you how I feel. I guess all I can say now is rest in peace and remember all the good times we had because I will never forget.

Andrea Harley

I Will Be Here for You

We seem to spend our lives
planning for the future,
tomorrow is always in our thoughts,
while today slips away,
and yesterday sometimes returns
to remind us of our
mistakes.

We try to hold the special moments,
forgetting that the best is yet to come,
that tomorrow is another day,
another chance to take,
another dream to fulfill.

Relationships don't always succeed,
friendships sometimes change,
but I want you to know,
no matter what happens to us,
I will always be here for you
Nathaniel!

Open arms to hold you,
an open heart to love you,
an open mind to listen,
you will never be alone.
Together
we will create
new dreams
and take our chances.

If we fail,
we won't hurt so badly,
because a friend's caring love
heals all wounds,
no matter how deep or painful.

So, please give a smile
that I can return,
a moment we can share,
allow me the time
to know you completely
and I will love you
just the way you are.

Rashonda Murray

Caring

Caring
involves sharing
when you show your respect
towards someone you care about
without a doubt
you feel great
about your mate
that you're both there for each other
and your caring is not under cover
when you all understand
that there are no bondages between your hands
when you show your love and affection
without rejection
there's a lot of trust
and your relationship is not based on lust

and it all leads to sharing
and that's my definition of caring.

Norman Britt

The Black Woman

She's a young black woman
she's tall like candycane,
her eyes are like brown sugar,
her skin is like chocolate,
her lips are like red cherry.

Her body's so sweet and thick,
that she makes my eyes melt.
Her voice like spring water.
She's like the volcano that
erupts without warning and
drowns you with her love.

Loboman

RELATIONSHIPS

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How to Improve Male-Female Relationships

There are many male-female relationships that fail terribly because they lack these simple qualities: honesty, trust, love, and respect. If couples were to encourage these qualities, I feel that their relationships would be better emotionally and physically.

Many teenagers today find it difficult to have respect for anyone, even themselves. First of all, some teenagers don't know the full meaning of respect, so it's hard for them to show it. It's very rare that respect would be acknowledged at the beginning, but sometimes a person can gain respect during the early stages of a relationship. Respect plays a very important part. You must have mutual respect if you want the relationship to grow.

There are two more qualities that improve many relationships: honesty and trust. If one partner is constantly lying to the other partner, there will be a lack of trust. The relationship can fail drastically if it is not based on honesty and trust. There would be petty arguments just because of "he-say-she-say" situations. One partner will find it hard trying to believe what the other says if there is not that primary understanding.

Love is a very powerful emotion. Love can be expressed in many different measures. It can be as great as "dying for someone" or as simple as giving a person your last dollar for something to eat. Love can be tangible. For example: the feel or sensation one receives when holding a baby in his/her arms for the first time. To explain love in a simple form — it's a strong affection or liking for someone or something. A relationship *must* have a great amount of love shown by each partner to be firm and stand on its own. Love, itself, is a combination of qualities. Love is caring, sharing, being helpful, considerate, kind, compassionate, non-provoking, patient, and of course, trustworthy and respectful. Love is not *materialistic* or *selfish*. As you see, there are many different measures to love.

If you want a successful, long-lasting relationship, practice developing all of these qualities and indeed your relationship will be successful.

Valerie D. Myers

The Two Sexes

Everyday we hear about guys wanting girls only for sex and girls wanting guys only for their money, cars, jewelry, etc. This is so true, no doubt about it. But I wouldn't say every guy is just all about having sex with a girl and leaving her. There are some guys who want girls just for who they are. But some girls really show that all they want from a guy is money, cars, and/or their jewelry.

Really, it's the immature ones who are like this, but once you get older then you'll know to like a person for who they are and what they are.

Kenneth Hazer

What is a woman?

I like a woman that can handle herself in any situation.
A woman who can control herself and is not led by temptation.
A woman who knows how to slow down when she's going too fast.
A woman who knows how to love and make a love last.
A woman who can love me and show me affection.
A woman that can direct herself in the right direction.

And if you need someone to lean on
I'll be there to show you love
and how much I care.

We both know how hard it is to keep a relationship together,
But if you're ready and willing
We can make it last forever.

Unfortunately it's so hard to find you
but I'm writing this poem just to remind you.

If you see this poem someday
I hope you come running to me right away.

Some men look for love
but I'll just wait and see
How long it will take you to come to me.

Kareem Glover

Sex and Teenagers

In this day in time, teenagers are having sex left and right without thinking. For some, they are being pressured into it, but for others, it's like trying to be down: if you are not sexually active and you hang around sexually active people, then they may have the tendency to tease you with the things they do and say, and because of this, you may be tempted to go off and have sex for all the wrong reasons. For example, you may just want to see how it feels, then go back and tell your friends about it. That will make you feel good and you won't feel left out around the gang.

But a lot of times when situations like this take place, people don't think before they react. They just give into peer pressure. Then once they go on and have sex, after being pressured by their friends, they don't think about what they did or why they did it because if they did so, they wouldn't repeat the same act again. They would see the stupidity in it all.

You are your own person. Nobody should be able to make you do anything. It's up to you to choose what kind of people you want to be around. It's up to you to make up your mind whom to have sex with and when is the right time. I feel this is something people should think about. I mean *really* think about because nowadays, by having sex you could either bring in a life or it could cost you your *own* life.

Takisha Heggs

The Big Prize

All my life
I've been thinking of things to say,
But it never seems to come out the right
way.
I always pray that God will bless you,
Because to me you're so very special.
You do for me what no woman can do,
That's why I write this poem
    From me to you.
If I ever disrespect you
    I will never feel the same.
I'll feel lost,
    Misguided
    And live my life in shame.
Because love
    Is the biggest prize
That God gave us
But we're blessed with more than love
We're blessed with trust.
Well, what should I expect?
You're a woman,
One of God's greatest creations
A vision of beauty,
    Intelligence,
With so much fascination.

One of the reasons why I love you so much
Is because you're so loving and caring
And even if you don't have much,
You're always sharing.
It's good to have friends
And to enjoy the company of another
But nobody and I mean nobody
Will take the place of my grandmother.
    I love you!

Kareem Glover

After A Death

They say time heals all wounds,
But they don't mention that scars remain.

Just about anything can trigger the memories.
Our thoughts of them are not forgotten or buried.

And during special moments and holidays,
How much we all wish you could still be here with us to celebrate.
And despite the fact we suffer and feel hurt,
We must continue to live our lives, and for happiness
we will search

So much we want to say.
But now the chance has slipped away.

Our lives will never quite be the same after someone we know dies,
Because you can't erase them from your mind,
And nothing can fill that gap left in your life.

Martha Rodriguez
Aide

Can You Relate ?

Relationships, female and male relationships of today, can be good. I say they can be good, but they aren't, and it could be different. Many teens today are in relationships because they are seeking love. They don't feel loved so they are looking for it in a relationship with a mate.

I feel the feeling of love should start at home. When I say at home, I mean with the family and most important with oneself. Most people nowadays think very little of themselves and lack self esteem and self confidence. What is needed is that people should learn to appreciate themselves for who they are, what they stand for, and have faith in whatever that may be. I feel a person who knows who they are, what they stand for, and is faithful to that, has the power of love and is reaching out to love people for who they are as people — not for the material things that have no value.

A person who believes in himself is willing to spread the power of love that is greater, way greater than any physical form of love. When I say physical form of love, I mean, you know how nowadays people can say they love you for your body, jewelry, clothes, reputation, etc . . . But what are those things? To me that's not love; it's lust. What I mean by this is something to satisfy your eye, or you in the eyes of others, in a physical way. Some people want to have a reputation of being so-called, "fly," and they are seeking a mate in this form. When you look for love in things of this nature, you tend to believe that these material things make you, when they don't. You are avoiding the real you and looking for you in things that really have no value over your mind, your heart, or your feelings.

So when you say you love someone, do you ask yourself why? When looking for love, what are you looking for? And will you or do you have the power of love?

I say, yes you do — within you.

Takisha Heggs

An Apology

Dear ————,

I have something to say to you, but I could not say it in person. I know what I've done to you was very wrong and selfish of me. I realize I was only thinking of my wants and needs. I told you I wanted to have an abortion because I needed money for shopping. I did not think of how I would hurt you by saying I was pregnant when I really wasn't. I even went to the extreme of telling you I went to the hospital, and when I came out from being under anesthesia, I told you that I saw the baby and that it was a boy. I knew how much you wanted a boy, so I guess that is why I said that.

Now, I realize the scar I put on your life and I am sorry. You told me you probably could not love anyone again because you've been hurt by someone you really loved. I never thought you really loved me, I thought you just wanted me for your own personal needs. I understand that I will have to regain your love and trust, and I will do whatever it takes. I hope you can forgive me. I know I'm probably asking you a lot, but I'm asking your forgiveness. Well, I'm going right now, but please take this letter into some consideration. I love you and I am really sorry.

Your girlfriend,

_____

Cookie

Friends

Friends are one of life's treasures.
They are those who help us through daily pressures.

They will respect you for who you are.
They won't try to change you or mock you from afar.

When you're feeling depressed or sad,
They won't get angry with you or turn their back.

Friends are the ones who share interests in common,
And your opposite likes will help you learn, not cause a problem.

You'll be there for each other to lend a helping hand,
At times one of you may want to be alone, but you will understand.

They will share your triumphs and happiness,
They won't try to discourage you or become envious.

Friends help one another broaden our horizons.
You can depend on them when you're feeling lost and need some guidance.

You'll tell and laugh at each other's jokes,
To make one another feel better and make life easier to cope.

Friends are the people you look forward to seeing each day.
And they feel about you the very same way.

Martha Rodriguez
Aide

A Guy Ain't True Unless He Really Loves You

Saying that I love you time after time
hoping and praying one day you'll be
mine.
Because I'm looking for a guy who's
special inside
Someone to hold me who can fulfill my
pride
Who can keep me warm when the
days are cold
And hold me forever until I grow old
Because guys out here talk about
what they can do
And haven't done a damn thing ever since
they met you
Because a guy ain't true unless he
really loves you!
He has to say it over-n-over, time after
time, either on the phone
or when he's home all alone
Either day or night
At least *sometime* is right

Guys are a trip, some make
you laugh.
And some make you sad
But don't feel so down
He'll be back around
Because you have to argue to get it
all out
So you would know equally what love
is all about
'Cause he admires and desires
you set his hands on fire
you're pleasing and teasing, playing
hide and seek
Calling it what you find is what
you keep
Coming in so deep, going straight in
his arms
Being fooled by his love and all
his charm

Later you become a mom and he's a dad
But now he's no good, hanging out
with the crooks from the neighborhood
The guy needs to help support his
kid, but he says the mother would
because ladies stay home to do
The work because they should
While the men are there having
a good time
Hanging out in the bar, drinking
old fashioned wine
While you're worried sick, got him all
off your mind, you're feeling down
You look everywhere and he's nowhere
to be found
So go with someone who treats
you like his wife.
'Cause being in love is like murder
in life
So when you start to have kids
remember everything you must do
Because a guy ain't true unless
he really loves you!

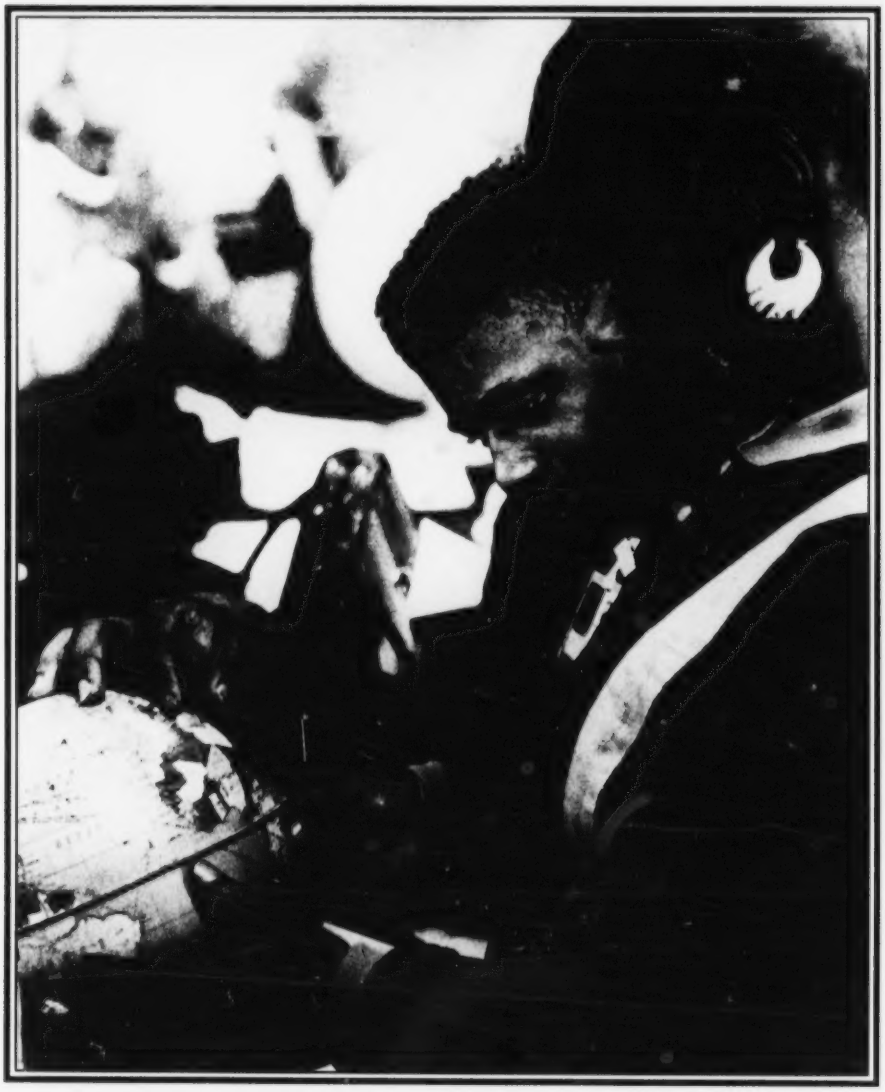
Shaivania Wilkerson

Slumber

You are so beautiful
Sleeping
Your delicate eyelids
Ashen eyelids
Such a young lady — now —
Your chest softly rises
and gently falls.
They asked me once
To take a night job
I needed the job
But it was totally clear
That I could not
Leave my baby
So beautiful
So precious
When you were asleep.

Margot Kirsis
Counselor

THIS OL' WORLD



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This Ol' World

This ol' world is not my home
I'm just passing through
I will live somewhere far
beyond the sky
Where I will be free to roam.

This ol' world is my hiding place
I go to school, work, and church
Waiting patiently
Just to see His face.

This ol' world is a sea of trouble
You wake up one day not knowing
if tomorrow is promised
Have faith, be safe
Get your life straight on the double.

This ol' world is not my home
All the fear, headaches and sorrow
Will be feelings I will no longer know.

Valerie D. Myers
inspired by the greatest woman in the world: my mother

Music

Music is very special in my life as well as in the lives of others. It lets us bring our emotions and thoughts out to one another. It can show the other soft-centered side of me. It also lets me see the joy I've been looking for.

With music, I can express myself much better because I feel like I'm in a kaleidoscope, with all its enchanting colors, that can melt my soul away and let every part of me go. Music's melody lets me keep a sense of humor in order to live and love.

Music also makes me wonder about tomorrow, about the future, the past, and present. It takes me around in circles with many questions that have to be answered. Therefore, music is a very powerful source in my life and in everyone's life, which can let the other side of us be seen in a special kind of way.

Andrea Rodriguez

Who I Am

My name is Sanja Alston and I see myself as a struggling young woman who is trying her best to make a life for myself and my family. I have a precious eighteen-month-old son and a darling man in my life. We have problems like everyone, but it's up to us to make it work. I feel I have a lot of good qualities. I'm a good listener, responsible, and reliable.

One of my short term goals is to attend the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and to take some child care courses. Another goal I wish to obtain is to get married in the near future, and have another baby. I would also like to work in different day care centers, in an effort to see if I really like to work with children in a day care setting.

My long term goals are to move out of the city, and find a decent place to live. I would also like to attend medical school and become a pediatrician. I want to raise my children with the help of my beloved fiance, and I would like to become more Afro-centric.

Sanja Alston

Drug Dealers in New York

I used to be a drug dealer and I must admit, it was the best time of my life. Me and the rest of the crew used to be in and out of cabs, going to eat dinner at fancy places, going to the movies every night and a lot of other things.

One day, I was standing on a street corner selling weed and a cop jumped out on me. He frisked me and found ten bags of smoke. He handcuffed me and took me into the police car and we were off to the precinct. I was in the holding cell for two days because my mother didn't want to come and get me out. Finally, when she came and got me, she slapped me, and I was punished for like a month. That just goes to show you that good things come to an end. I decided to stop selling drugs because that's not the move. Now I'm concentrating on being somebody and making something out of myself.

Another reason why I stopped selling drugs was because with a criminal record, you can't get any good jobs, like a doctor's job or a lawyer's job. All you could do is keep selling drugs because no one wants to hire you for a good job.

Michael Hargrove

Anger Towards Love

Love me not for your soul I will have
forgotten. You tell me you love me that's
a laugh. After I finish using you, your heart
will be a thing of the past.

You tell me you miss me but meanwhile I make
your soul weep. Why? I don't give you love and
affection. Your love I do not feel it's not real.
Don't you know I would rob and steal for you.
But all along you make the blue skies turn
gray because of the love you feel falls astray.

You tell me over and over I love you, I love
you, I love you. But in the month of June you
made that summer very gloom. While you were
crying I was smiling. Just seeing you hurt
left a happy smirk. Anger towards love? yes
because there is no reward for all the pain
and sorrow. Just a lonely night hoping and
praying someone comes and makes it right.

Sylestine Edwards

What am I Worried About?

I'm worried about how will my life ever fall into place. Will anything ever work out? I have a son, a job, and I also go to school. I am doing all of this to make a better life for me and my son Michael. I am back in school to get my G.E.D. I go to school every day. I go to all my classes and do most of the work. I am trying very hard to pass because I would like to go to college. I would like to be someone one day, someone my child can be proud of, someone he can look up to, the model he will tell all his friends about. I worry about things like that. How will he look up to me when he gets older?

Will he respect me? Or try to run over me? I worry about that.

I also worry about two other things in my life. Will I find a good job? Will I ever find a man that will take care of me and not abuse me? I want someone to go to the park, movies, out to dinner, and so on. I want someone that will accept me and my son, someone who will not exclude Michael. I worry about things like that. I want a good job because I like expensive things, not only for me but for Michael. I would like to have a nice apartment; I would like to have nice things in it. Last, I would like Michael to go to a private school and they don't come cheap! So these are a few of the things I worry about.

Angeligue Moore

New York City

New York City
The city that lights up at night like
a Christmas tree
The city with crime in its streets
each and every day of the week
The city where innocence dies
and violence rises
The city where crack and cocaine
reign over everything
It's loved by some and feared by others
New York, New York, New York City
despite this all
It's a big, bright, and beautiful place

Roslyn Bobb-Semple

A Letter Of Tears

Dear President Bush:

I feel that we should not have gone into war. I did not know what the whole situation was about, but for the little information that I received from you, it's all about oil. I don't understand why millions of your people had to die for your power; something you already have and something you will always have.

Excuse me if I'm disrespecting you, but I think you were being very selfish; not only to the people who voted you into office, but to your family. Maybe you don't care, but someone in your family cares.

I think Saddam Hussein and you should have made some type of agreement, but about the time you would have received this "letter of tears" it would have been too late and half of a thousand people would already be dead.

I feel sorry for these people who put their lives in front of weapons that would have killed them. I did not know anyone personally over there. I still feel like I am missing a big part of my family.

I don't care too much about myself, but I brought my baby into this world; I do have something to live for. I would love to see my baby girl grow up into a world that she will be proud of and respect. I don't know what she thinks of this world.

All I can do is pray to God and hope you will open your eyes and realize how you are killing off your country.

Letter of Tears.

Loreen Y. Robinson

Career Goals

I feel that I must get my GED. From there start planning my goals, like with drug counseling and a journalism career. If I don't start soon, I won't be nothing but another person on welfare or maybe a homeless person on 42nd street. So what I'm trying to say is I'm going to be somebody.

Michael Hargrove

Education Is...

A better job and career
More money and experience
A better education for us to better our children
It's self-confidence
It's exploration into further history.

Loreane Williams
Kim Dow
Nicole Cox
Maria Skerrett
Suzette Billings

Education Is...

The importance of education is so you can develop for jobs, college, and the world of work. It is also important for life today so you can function everyday. It helps you to reach your own values and self-esteem, to achieve your goals in life.

Shauna Lebron
Lita Milson
Dareline Vaughn
Stacey Barnes
Denise Carter

Education Is...

We believe that an education is important because it's the only way you can get ahead in life. The more education you have the more choices you have to choose from. Learning is fun because you're able to do things for yourself instead of asking for help from other people. If you yourself become educated then your children will be able to become more educated.

Lillian Pineda
Carmen Alicea
Annie Lanzilotto
Fawn-Nita Lunn

What Calls Me

What calls me?
the death of my parents
calls me.
the rebirth of my life
to come calls me.
It asks me how, when,
where, and why?

My parents ask me
"When will I stop"
and I reply
"What do you want me
to stop?"
Should I stop using drugs,
Smoking weed with my
friends?
Should I stop drowning
myself in liquor
just to get away from things,
from my life, from myself?
At times I call for help
and no one answers back.

People call me.
I call myself
But what am I to do?
Of course I could just
end all of it,
but I wonder who
then is going to call me?
Who will call?
Who will it be?
Or will they be
calling on my soul?

Gloria Fernandez

Is The Minimum Wage Fair?

Some employers think that teenagers should be paid less than the minimum wage, but I disagree because inflation is too high. I think that the minimum wage should be $5.00 an hour. Some teenagers have bills and responsibilities. It's not easy for anyone to live on minimum wage.

Transportation used to cost 50 cents; today it costs $1.15 to ride the bus or train. It's going to go up to $1.35! Clothing is high priced, too. Sneakers and jeans cost about $50.00 and up. There's no way anyone can keep up with inflation, if the minimum wage remains at $4.25.

Some teenagers have bills to pay, like rent, electricity, gas, and telephone bills. There are other responsibilities, too. Some teenagers have a child or children to support. It's not easy for teenagers or anyone else to work for minimum wage.

Some employers think that teenagers should be paid less than the minimum wage, but I think it is unfair and wrong to pay youth the minimum wage or less. It's unfair because teenagers have bills and other responsibilities. I personally think teenagers should get more than $4.25 rather than less. After all, they have a right to a live normal life like anyone else.

Nancy Grajalen

Teen Pregnancy

Having a baby at a young age can be very difficult for the teen and the baby because there are a lot of responsibilities that the teen has to handle. There are many reasons to have a baby and not to have a baby.

There are a lot of good reasons for having a baby. For instance, if the mother really loves the unborn child's father and the father loves her and is willing to help her out with the baby, that's one reason to keep the baby. Another is that sometimes having a baby of their own gives them a good reason to live and to better themselves in their education. Third of all, some people feel that abortion is killing an innocent child. If the teenager is pregnant she should either keep the baby or give it up for adoption. Having an abortion can hurt the mother as well as the baby. So my advice to a young mother would be, don't kill your baby; have your baby.

There are several reasons for not having a child. For one, the teenager may not be financially ready because the father walked out on her and she is not receiving any steady income. Second, she may not want to take on the responsibilities of raising a child, or may not realize how much time a baby requires. The teenager may still want to hang out and play around, but when the baby starts crying, that child will let her know that it's not a toy that she can pick up when she wants and put back down when she gets tired of it.

Teenagers should use some protection when they're having sexual intercourse with someone because the consequences are very hard and having a baby is very hard. So my advice to teenagers is: if you're not ready for a baby, don't get pregnant, and if you ARE pregnant, don't kill your child.

Deidra Mathis

School Is . . .

Dear Niece Shakeyra,

When I was in Martin Van Buren High School, I considered school a place to meet people and to have fun, but at the same time it was a place of violence. I am taking the time to write to you because I don't want you to think the same things I did when I was in school.

School is a place to go to class and learn and get an education — it's not just for meeting friends, having fun, or fighting everyday of the week. You won't be the one to see it, but those people you call friends are the bad influence. When you get in trouble they aren't going to do anything for you. Instead, they are going to stand by and watch you get suspended or kicked out of school. I can tell you now, that it's not going to look good for you in the future, if you plan on doing something with yourself. Therefore, be good, take your time, and get an education, so you can be something.

Take care of yourself,

Yolanda Broughton

Inside of Me

Inside of me is a deep dark hole
waiting to be filled.
and then sometimes, I am a flower
waiting to blossom.
I am a ballerina always on my
toes.
Where the happiness goes sometimes
nobody knows.
I am a petal of a flower
I am strong and alive trying hard
to strive.
sometimes I am up
sometimes I down
My life takes on new strife
I am quiet
Most of all, I am proud to be who
I am

Marlene Linen

Gazing At The East River

Looking at water makes me think of the moving constant motion of the body of water and how it can put you in a solemn state of mind. It makes my mind wander off into another point and time, leaving me to imagine how the mask of water moves endlessly towards one direction, but not all with the same rhythm, depending on the force currents and the way the wind is blowing, it almost seems not real. Focusing on the small waves gently swaying freely against the reflection of the sky.

It makes me feel passive, as though I'm engulfed by its peacefulness. I feel at ease and as though my mind is taking a journey like a bird gliding over the water and letting its wholeness absorb every moment that I was under its spell.

It also makes me travel to another state and time. It leaves my mind open to wonder what once was, or what is going to be, in that particular spot where I am gazing at the water.

In the real sense, I'm curious to know whether this massive amount of water is there for eternity, or is it, as I am, just a passing in time with an inevitable destination of being no more what once was.

Keshin Dawkins

Madrid

A country under invasion by another nation.
The soldier trying to control the rage of people.
They round up all the men and put them in front of a military squad.
As the squad prepared to shoot, a man cries out: "Die with honor for your country."

The men know they will not see sunrise again.
As death is near, one man shouted: "Viva Espana!"
Then, a great noise came out from the rifles.
The men fell down an absence of light covered them.

Roberto Ceasar

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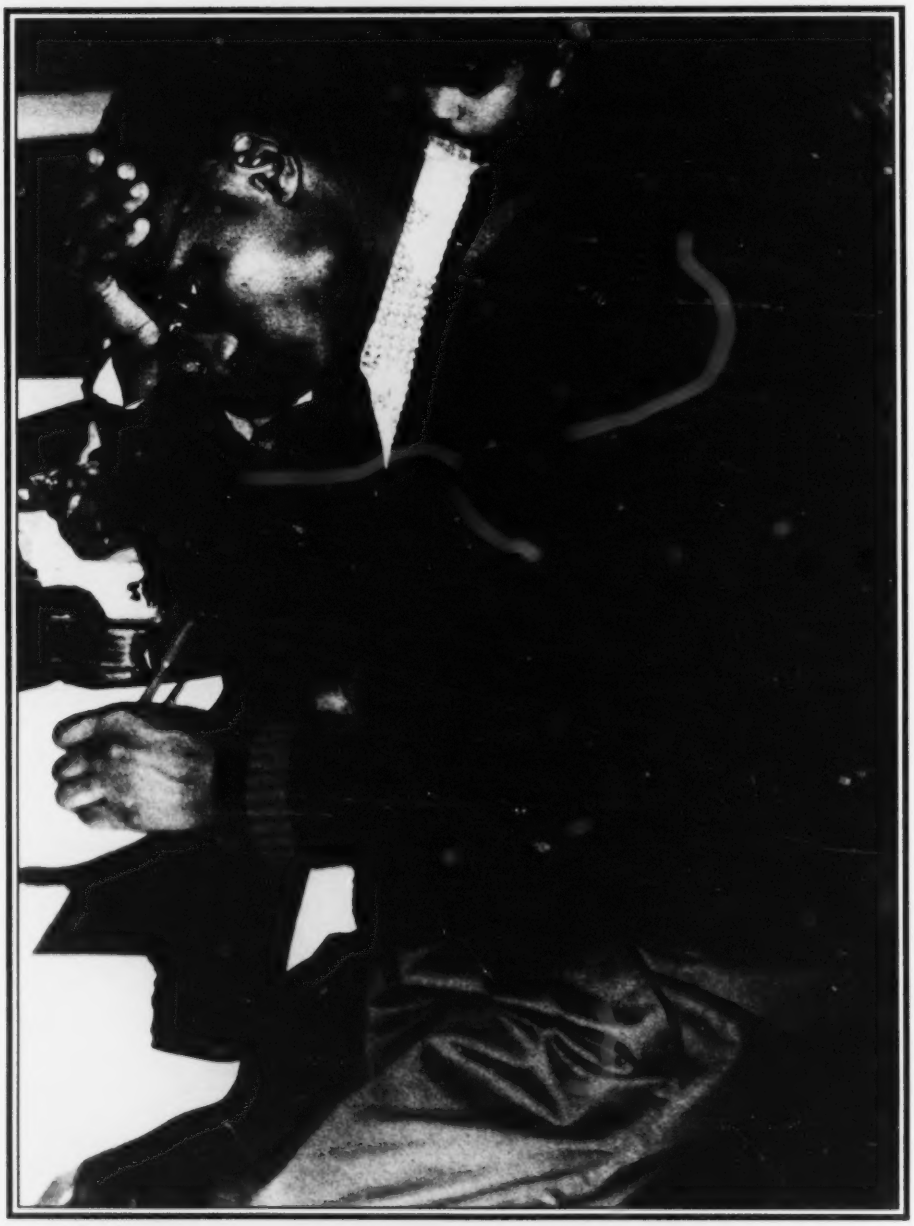
THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE



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March Toward Freedom

Black March Toward Freedom
start out in Africa
land of great diversity
land of the longest river
the African cultural heritage
is where you find out what your brothers did

religion is based on Moslems and Christians
for our brothers and sisters are strong
for we were in slavery for so long
for we were told that we were ignorant
and we couldn't understand
that was just one of the things said by the Ku Klux Klan
to keep down the black man

higher education
we seek in the nation
like Martin Luther King
let freedom ring
he eased racial tension
he did it without violent confrontation
he proved every white man wrong in the nation
whereas, if he was still around to see them
we'd still be Marching Toward Freedom

Norman Britt

Keeping Dreams Alive

Keeping dreams alive takes a great deal of motivation.
For them to come true you need to have patience and dedication.

Nothing is going to be handed to you on a silver platter.

There will be days when you feel like giving up.
But you can't let go; you have to hang in there and be tough.

Some people will stand by you and give you their support.

And there will be times when you'll be underestimated.
But you mustn't let yourself be intimidated.

Courage and faith in God are essential.

Some will say you're in over your head.
But it's better to give it a try than to wonder later
what could have been instead.

A few goals are better than just one.

It's best to have more than one goal set for your life.
In case one doesn't succeed, there will be others to try.

Hard work and a clear mind will eventually pay off.

I believe that dreams can come true
if you care enough to keep them alive.
It's after you stop trying and caring
that they will eventually die.

Martha Rodriguez
Aide

Should People Forget The Past?

Should people forget their history and culture because it will only depress them and keep them from thinking about how to get what they want today?

I believe that all of our people should forget the past; it will only depress them or keep them from thinking about how to get what they want. If people want to get a lot out of life, they have to live their life as it is, and not as their family and ancestors lived their lives. People should look at their life as it is now, today, and live their lives to the fullest of their ability.

If people today live the way people lived yesterday (years ago), they will become depressed, because in those days there was nothing but depression. People will never get what they want out of life because they'll be living in a world of human sadness, a world of great loss and aggravation.

Our people have had such a misunderstood past, and some of us try to go back into the past and ask why? where? and how did certain things happen to certain people? By doing this, some get even more confused than they were when they first started to search. As confusing as life is today, going back into your past will make you even more confused, and you may be wondering for the rest of your life about what happened. You may not want to go on with whatever goals you have in life.

Digging up dirt that has already been buried years ago is depressing and might truly make you forget who you are and what you stand for in your own life today.

People should forget the past and never look back; just keep on pushing for what you want and knock down any barricades or obstacles standing in their way. Get what you want out of life and not what the government or the other people make you settle for. Don't settle for less than what *you* want. Keep going and never, ever look back into the past.

I believe that it is very important to always know about your background and history. I may not know much about my family background and my ancestors, but I'm very anxious to find out. Sometimes, I wish that I could go and take a long journey way back and find out where my family tree started from the beginning. How did I get my last name, and who did it come from?

I feel that keeping someone away from their family history may be stressful because they have no kind of idea where they came from. If it were me, I would be a little depressed not knowing where my family roots started from. When I was a little girl, my mother told me that my great grandfather was a runaway slave known as Mr. Little. That's where my great grandmother got her name.

Sometimes, I wish I had gotten to know my grandmother Lizzie. She was so sweet, the best grandmother that anybody could have. She had long, black, straight Indian hair. It was like licorice. I used to ask my mother how come grandma had Indian hair. She said that we were half Cherokee Indian. My uncle also has pretty hair, just like my grandmother.

I strongly suggest and feel that it's important to know about your family history. Otherwise you'll never know who you're related to!

Michele Adams
Shelley Jackson

One Comes Home, The Prayer

Realizing that nothing can hurt me
while I lean upon my higher power...

I ask to be guided through the minutes
and hours of each day...

When I am tempted or pressured into
irrational behavior, I pray that I may stop and think
before I do or say anything whatsoever.

I ask you, Lord: To remove these impulses
and help me to grow into the person
you want me to be...

Let me not expect easy solutions to my problem;
make me realize that many of my difficulties
were created by me.

By my own reaction to the happening in
happenings in my daily life...

I ask only to be guided to a better way...

You said in your word that if I would
"trust in the Lord with all thy heart,
and lean not unto thine own understanding,
in all ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs)

I pray that each day may advance my steps
on the road to understanding,
that I may leave nothing undone
that could have changed the course of my life
for the better.

Norman L. Damon
YMCA Counselor

Books

I read books to my son. Although he is just fifteen months old, I would like for him to get familiar with books. Every night, I read stories to him. For example, I read *Jungle Book*, *Animals on the Farm*, and *The Three Pigs*. He enjoys looking at the colors and shapes.

Sometimes when I'm reading to him, his mind isn't set on reading at the time, so what I do is talk to him, and I tell him that it is time to wind down and read a book. Then, he would concentrate on what I'm reading to him.

Sanja Alston

Hope

Drops of rain hitting my window.
What a gloomy day. I don't
feel like doing anything. Will
tomorrow be like today?
No, it will be a sunshine day
and I will feel like doing
everything.

Deirdre Myers

Old Hag

Old woman with the wrinkle skin
let the Old Hag work begin
Put on your firey disguise
old woman with the weary eyes
shed your swizley skin
Ball o' fire raise up high
raise up 'till you touch the sky
land on somebody's roof top
slip in through the keyhole
Poof! Open the Old Hag eye
find the baby, lift the sheet
make a puncture with your teeth
suck the baby dry.

Next day you gone out just the same
rap up in your ball o' flame
to find and suck another child
But take care rumour spreading
wild and people know your name!

Roslyn Bobb-Semple

If You Want to Eat a Toad
You Should Look for a Fat and Juicy One

Striving for the Best

If you want a car, go for a big red Jaguar.
If you want home expansion, move into a mansion.
If you want to go a float, buy a yacht, the biggest boat.
If you want some new clothes, forget the sales, go straight to Bloomingdales.

We wrote this poem just for fun,
but if you want to eat a toad,
you should look for a fat and juicy one.

Stacey Barnes
Tolisa Chisolm
Lita Milson
Fawn-Nita Lunn

He Loves Me?
He Loves Me Not?

He loves me, he loves me not. I guess he don't
love me because he's always abusing my face.
A black-eye on my right eye. I try to pass him
by but he swings on me anyway. What did I do
wrong? I do whatever he tells me. When he gets
high I start to cry.

He loves me, he loves me not. Now me and my man
made-up. I just can't let him go. I try not to
give him a reason to give me a fatal blow.

He loves me, he loves me not. Now I am in
jail for killing my man. He sniffed some
blow. I don't know what went wrong but
now I can stop singing that song:
He loves me, he loves me not.

Sylestine Edwards

The Evil

I feel like a gun just waiting for someone to pull my leg and release the evil in me. I feel like a knife stuck in a warm place; this is the evil in me. I feel like a fire sweeping through an apartment, sending people running; this is the evil with no care in the world. I feel like a lion waiting for the kill of the night, an owl wide awake looking for its victim. This is the evil in me, the evil with no care in the world. Don't mess with the evil in me.

Jeffery Smith

Homelessness

Homelessness is cold and heartless
Homelessness means no warm
place to stay, nothing to eat.

Homelessness is humiliating, all
pride is lost. Homelessness is sad.
It makes me so mad.

I want to scream
like a plague taking people's
homes and leaving them homeless

If I could, I would look
homelessness squarely in
the face and tell it, "I'm going to
fight you, and I'm going to win!"

LaTanya Bailey

If I Was A Hermit

If I was a hermit, I would like to live in a great big forest, but I'd like to live deep, deep in the forest, where only the animals would wander, where only the sun would seep through the tree leaves and only the birds would fly through. A place where flowers never seen, their beauty beyond recognition, grow near a stream of crystal clear water where you can only see your reflection run wild but yet gentle, where colorful fish would jump up and back into the water, with the smell of lilies in the air. I would live by myself where only the animals are my friends. I would use my power of speech, but not speech that humans understand. It would be to talk to the animals who would be my only friends.

Gloria Fernandez

Beginning

A wise person once said that life is essentially
A series of beginnings. Beginnings are important.
They start action, they bring movement into being.
May the beginnings started at Yala continue
throughout the beginning
that will form the rest of your life.

Margot Kirsis, Counselor
Trina Murray, Counselor
Sherrell Nelson, Field Supervisor
Tom Roberts, Counselor

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